Embracing the Moon in the Sky or Fishing the Moon in the Water?

Some Thoughts on Military Deterrence: Its Effectiveness and Limitations

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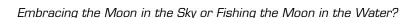

Deterrence as a military strategic concept came along after the debut of nuclear weapons. For more than 60 years, it has evolved into one of the most frequently used—and abused—concepts in the games of international politics and military services. In the meantime, numerous related theories, ideas, and notions have branched out.[1] Exactly what is deterrence—its nature, effectiveness,

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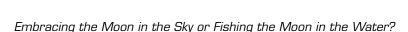| 16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
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and limitations? How and why is the concept often miscomprehended and misinterpreted, and why has it evolved to become something mythical? What effects has it had on the global security environment? And how should the militaries of developing nations view and employ deterrence? This article tries to answer these questions.

Three Components of Deterrence

In international strategy studies, the general view on deterrence holds that it is a country's threat to use force to prevent an adversary from taking damaging actions against it. Back in 1957, in his book *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, Henry Kissinger identified three components of deterrence: "Deterrence requires a combination of power, the will to use it, and the assessment of these by the potential aggressor. Moreover, deterrence is the product of those factors and not the sum. If any one of them is zero, deterrence fails."[2] In the following decades, Kissinger's formula of deterrence has remained true and broadly appreciated. As such, this article adopts his formula. After exploring this line of thinking and focusing on the three components that Kissinger identified, one may arrive at three inferences.[3]

First, *deterrence is not unilateral military actions; rather, it is a complicated process of interactions between the opposing parties*. Furthermore, unlike ordinary military actions, the success of deterrence—the production of desired effects—does not depend on the superiority of the deterrer over the deterred.

Second, deterrence inherently and tightly links to military threats. The deterring state implements deterrence via a threat to use force in an attempt to compel the adversary to give up conspired or construed hostile plans or actions. In this sense, *so-called military deterrence is no less and no more than threatening the opponent with force*. However, in an international society made up of sovereign states, the deterred nations often counter such military threats in kind, turning deterrence from unilateral to mutual, unequal as they may be. From what has happened

to date, to deem the deterrence concept a theoretical source of most of the international crises in the Cold War years is not an overstatement.

Third, deterrence as a strategic concept is inherent in the gene of failure. In the face of military threats, if the state being deterred does not take the damaging actions presumed by the deterring state, the latter may assume that its deterrence strategy has worked. However, how can the deterring state be so sure that what has not happened is a positive result of its deterrence? Honest evidence won't come from the deterred state; the deterring state may use some human intelligence or technical means to collect evidence, which is usually insufficient for the deterring state to measure the effectiveness of its deterrence strategy. In contrast, it is fairly easy to determine the failure of this same strategy: all one needs to know is that the deterred state ignores the military threats and keeps following its course of action. Thus, *for a deterrence strategy, success is always hard to prove while failure is easily visible.*

Notwithstanding the complexities and uncertainties of the concept of deterrence, after World War II, the nations of the Western world enthusiastically embraced this theory to formulate their military strategies. Politicians and security scholars were particularly fond of two troublesome "strategic gums": containment and deterrence, which they kept chewing for decades.[4] After the end of the Cold War, the "containment gum" seemed marginalized, but, as for the "deterrence gum," they are still reluctant to spit it out.[5]

Deterrence as a fundamental theory underlying Western military teachings has produced many derivatives: nuclear deterrence, conventional deterrence, escalated deterrence, extended deterrence, and maximum or minimum deterrence, to name just a few. Within them, one finds many "woolly concepts"; more importantly, they collectively reflect the tendency of evolving towards a "deterrence generalization." Ironically, when everything can be interpreted as deterrence, deterrence becomes nothing.

Why are Western military analysts so fond of deterrence theory? The answer lies in reality rather than theory. First and foremost, deterrence is

the favorite of the strong. We recall that the first component of deterrence is "power" or military strength. Usually people would think that only the stronger is qualified to deter, though military history repeatedly proves that the reality is not so simple. Since the end of World War II, the members of the Western world in many circumstances have held a strategic advantage—indeed, superiority—over their adversaries, compared with the majority of developing nations.[6] So it is natural that they tend to "subdue the enemy without fighting"—that is, to win by deterrence.[7]

Next, after the birth of the atomic bomb and its huge impact on military doctrine, advocacy of deterrence is a logical development. Fortunately or unfortunately, the atomic bomb, because of its nuclear overkill effects, was by no means a convenient weapon on the battlefield. This was particularly true as the Soviet Union also successfully developed its own nuclear arsenal. The United States found itself in a dilemma where, on the one hand, it had to highlight the strategic role of nuclear weapons and, on the other, strictly restrict itself in the use of those weapons. As such, deterrence theory both reflects the new international strategic reality of nuclear competition between the United States and Soviet Union after World War II and meets the new strategic demand to place one's (and one's allies') national security on top of the nuclear arsenal.

Finally, designed to prevent potential enemies from launching preemptive attacks, deterrence in theory is of a defensive nature. When a nation frames its military strategy on deterrence and then launches military actions under the flag of defense at the time of its choosing, it "kills two birds with one stone." Politically and morally, that country seizes the commanding point and at the same time harvests strategic gains for its national security.

Deterrence after World War II: Its Success and Failure

A brief review of how the concept of deterrence was developed and employed, and how it succeeded or failed, may help the current discussion approach the core nature of this concept. As mentioned be-

fore, the birth of nuclear weapons prompted the concept of deterrence. Deterrence was nuclear in the first place. At the very beginning, the United States did not distinguish between a nuclear bomb and its conventional kin except that the former was much more powerful, as demonstrated by the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.[8] That said, as early as 1946, Bernard Brodie, an initial architect of US nuclear deterrence strategy, remarked, "Thus far the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them. It can have almost no other useful purpose."[9] In reality, however, the US military was actively preparing to win the next war by means of the massive use of nuclear weapons.[10] In July 1953, right after the truce that ended the Korean War, some US strategic analysts criticized the way the war was fought. They bluntly questioned why the United States, with such huge nuclear superiority, did not make the best of its nuclear weapons. Soon after, the world's first nuclear-based military strategy—the massive retaliatory strategy—was born. According to some US strategists of the time, if a single Soviet soldier steps across the Iron Curtain, the United States will launch retaliatory nuclear attacks "at times and places of our choosing."[11] In this context, one could consider the so-called massive retaliatory strategy equivalent to the nuclear deterrence strategy.

However, the global situation that developed disappointed US strategic decision makers somewhat; they acknowledged that a massive retaliatory strategy was, after all, something not easily applicable. True, Soviet forces did not cross the Iron Curtain, yet regional conflicts with various complexities kept evolving. Moreover, Uncle Sam, with plenty of nuclear bombs in his arms, simply felt strong restraints that kept him from dropping them. Against this background, a group of strategists represented by Kissinger put forward another concept different from, but closely related to, that of deterrence—limited warfare.[12] This addition lent substance to the concept of deterrence as the core of US military strategy. On top of this, Herman Kahn developed escalation theory, which in essence called for gradually increasing the level of deterrence.[13]

As many people have pointed out, the strategic employment of deterrence theory successfully prevented a nuclear conflict. Initially, the nuclear-based military strategy of the United States upset the Soviet Union, which then rolled full speed ahead to develop and build its own nuclear arsenal for exactly the same objective of dissuading its rival from launching a preemptive nuclear attack. Mutual nuclear deterrence between these two superpowers soon took shape and lasted for decades. A series of strategic crises that occurred during the next two decades more clearly defined and strengthened the US-Soviet strategic relationship of mutual nuclear deterrence. The Cuban missile crisis in October 1962 served as a timely wake-up call to the two superpowers, making them keenly aware of the existence of mutual nuclear deterrence and the possible eruption of nuclear war.[14] Although elbowing each other in the unavoidable nuclear arms race, both countries came to recognize that they must avoid the head-on conflict and that they must regulate the race with rules of engagement. Wading through an approximately 10-year-long negotiation, the two superpowers finally reached strategic stability on the basis of mutual assured destruction (MAD).

MAD stopped both sides from pulling the nuclear trigger first. Indeed, it also prevented conventional wars between the United States and Soviet Union. During the Cold War, the world witnessed a number of regional conflicts; seldom or never did any of them feature face-to-face confrontations of any size between the two superpowers (table 1).

Table 1. Superpower involvement in Cold War regional conflicts

Regional Conflict	Time Frame	US Involvement	USSR Involvement
Korean War	1950–53	Direct	Indirect
Vietnam War	1964–74	Direct	Indirect
Afghan War	1979–89	Indirect	Direct

In the Korean War, knowing that the Soviet air force physically participated in the fighting, the United States refrained from acknowledging that fact openly, all for the purpose of avoiding large-scale direct

conflict with the Soviet forces. On 12 February 1988, on the Black Sea, two US warships sailed into waters only eight nautical miles from the Soviet coast. To repel the intruders, Soviet navy ships reacted by issuing warnings, sending clear signals ("We are going to bump you!"), and then nudging the US ships in the side.[15] Ironically, both sides were equipped with antiship cruise missiles, navy guns, torpedoes, and all kinds of sophisticated weapons, yet neither dared to use them. In this reality show, we saw two muscled men confronting each other, both armed to the teeth, but choosing to use brooms for the duel—they have to fight against each other, but neither must kill the other. Underneath this amusing scene lies mutual nuclear deterrence.

Although nuclear deterrence strategy successfully prevented an all-out war between the superpowers, it drove them into a frenzied nuclear race that put the whole world under the shadow of nuclear catastrophe. According to US nuclear deterrence doctrine, to ensure credible nuclear deterrence sufficient to dissuade the Soviets from launching any preemptive strike, the United States had to hold "assured destruction" capabilities, be able to kill 20–25 percent of the Soviet Union's population, and destroy 50 percent of its industry.[16] To counter, the USSR adopted the same or a similar strategic calculation. Both sides refused to be on the nuclear weak side, leading to the "Matthew effect" whereby each side's nuclear "capital" accumulated to the point that it could destroy the entire world dozens of time over.[17] In this sense, the perceived success of nuclear deterrence rested on unacceptable consequences: people forced to live in a world endangered by protracted "nuclear winter." Following the same doctrine of nuclear deterrence, both superpowers kept their nuclear forces on high alert and many times approached the red line of pressing the nuclear buttons.[18] According to the US nuclear war plan in place at the time (the Single Integrated Operational Plan), in case nuclear conflict erupted between the United States and USSR, the United States would destroy not only the Soviet Union but also China. Indeed, in January 1972, just before President Nixon's visit to Beijing, 600 US nuclear warheads were aimed at China.[19]

In stark contrast to its success in preventing nuclear conflicts, the post–World War II deterrence strategy has failed time and again in averting conventional regional conflicts, which took place for many different reasons. To label them indiscriminately as "Soviet proxy wars," as some American strategists did, was sheer generalization and oversimplification.[20] Nuclear deterrence simply would not work with people who fight for their national independence, liberation, and unification. Besides, having possessed nuclear weapons, neither the United States nor the Soviet Union had the guts to punch each other face-to-face. Regional or local clashes became their logical venues to weaken one another indirectly for strategic advantage. In other words, these two superpowers were themselves part of the causes that led to numerous local clashes. Under these circumstances, how could nuclear weapons deter those regional conflicts? The US government used the Vietnam War as a test ground for "graduated deterrence escalation." However, going hand in glove with it, failure also escalated gradually.

To further illustrate the limited effectiveness of deterrence, let's take a look at strategic interactions between China and the United States during the Korean War and Vietnam War. In early October 1950, Zhou Enlai, China's premier and foreign minister at the time, asked K. M. Panikkar, then the Indian ambassador to China, to pass China's clear warning to the United States: If US military forces advance across the 38th parallel, "we will take the matter into our hands."[21] The US decision circle received but ignored this warning, figuring that China was merely bluffing. First, China had already missed a good chance for a military intervention; second, it was still recovering from the civil war and faced many daunting domestic challenges; and third, the United States possessed the world's most powerful military, and China was simply no match.[22] On 25 October, China sent its People's Volunteer Army across the Yalu River heading into North Korea, and in July 1953, the Korean War ended where it broke out. Eleven years later, in 1964, when the United States expanded its invasion into Vietnam, China again delivered a clear-cut warning: If US forces cross the 17th parallel into North Vietnam, China will intervene. This time, US deci-

sion makers took China's warning seriously and ordered their ground forces not to enter the North. During the war, China sent air defense, engineering, and logistics forces into North Vietnam, but the Americans pretended that they did not know.

From these two wars, should one draw the conclusion that China's deterrence against the United States failed in 1950 but succeeded in 1964? The answer is no. Whether in 1950 or 1964, Chinese leaders never expected to stop the US military intervention with only a few words. The Korean War experience indicates that having strength and the will to use it, as well as sending unmistakable signals, is not necessarily enough to ensure successful deterrence. In the Vietnam War, US ground troops stopped at the 17th parallel, not because China demonstrated deterrence but because the US government had now learned that the Chinese leaders were not bluffing. Further, Washington was not willing to collide head-on with the Chinese one more time.

The discussion above indicates that so-called deterrence is but a derivative effect produced from the employment of military power. This leads one to question whether something called "deterrence capabilities" really exists. Capability, an attribute of the subject of action, can enable some action and produce certain effects. In other words, a capability can be measured by sizes and degrees based on the effects it achieves. Deterrence, however, only evolves into two opposite endings: effective (i.e., it succeeds) or ineffective (i.e., it fails). Deterrence cannot be measured in terms of big or small, high or low. *Actual military capabilities generate the effects of deterrence, which one can describe as big, small, high, or low. But no direct connection exists between these military capabilities and the success or failure of deterrence. Indeed, so-called deterrence capabilities are but a fallacy.*[23] For many years, Western military strategists have invested an enormous amount of time and effort trying to prove the existence of deterrence capability. They try to change deterrence from what it should be (a process of mutual, dynamic interactions between the opposing parties) to what they want it to be—unilateral military actions designed to establish a direct con-

nection between military capabilities and deterrence capabilities.[24] By doing so, these strategists succeed in confusing themselves.[25] Furthermore, they peddle this notion everywhere, hoping to mislead all the others into the same confusion.

The Nature of Deterrence and Its Alienation

One can further understand deterrence as a transaction of strategic gains and losses between two opposing parties. By threatening to use its superior military power, the deterring side (often the strong side) compels the deterred side or sides (often the weak side or sides) to back down or compromise in a way that benefits the strong and supposedly allows the weak to avert yet bigger losses. Obviously, such transactions are never fair, insofar as the deterring side turns deterrence into a sort of strategic kidnapping, holding the other side's larger interests under imminent risk and forcing it to pick the "smaller loss" solution and give in. Now we may define the nature of deterrence as *holding hostage the critical security interests of the deterred side and demanding that it accept an unequal strategic transaction*. Back in the 1960s, China's strategic research community gave US nuclear deterrence another name: nuclear blackmail. The term, though bearing the political ingredients of the time, was appropriate as regards the nature of deterrence. Anyway, for policy makers, whether on the strong side or the weak, a strategic decision is no more than making a choice based on calculations of interests and strengths, gains and losses.

History shows that deterrence may fail. Why so? Unlike observations by some Western strategists, in many cases, it is not because the deterring side does not possess enough strength or because it has not delivered a sufficiently clear message about its resolve to use that strength. Often, the answer lies not so much with the deterrer as with the deterred. One major reason is that what the deterring side perceives as the deterred side's crucial interests is in fact not as crucial as it deems. Here one should pay attention to the difference between Western and other civilizations. For example, when it comes to considerations of

value, in Western culture, life is the most valuable thing of all; therefore, the deterring side logically places it under threat. In Eastern culture, however, there is something more valuable than life. Lao Tzu, founder of China's ancient Daoism, expressed this fact most thoroughly: "When people do not fear to die, what's the use of threatening them with death?"[26] Five basic scenarios illustrate the success and failure of military deterrence (summarized in table 2, following the discussion of the scenarios).

Scenario 1: Side B, the deterrer, holds hostage the critical interests (A1) of Side A, the one being deterred, asking Side A to compromise in A2, which is not as valuable as A1, whereas Side B's cost (B2) would be very small and ignorable. After comparing A1 and A2, Side A gives up. The deterrence of Side B succeeds.

Scenario 2: Side B holds hostage Side A's critical interests A1, asking for A2, which is not as valuable as A1. In response, Side A takes Side B's interests (B1) hostage, which is as important to Side B as A1 is to Side A and bigger than A2. The situation is complicated, and the deterrence of Side B transforms into mutual deterrence. This in some sense means the failure of Side B. One often sees such a "boomerang effect" in the practice of military deterrence.

Scenario 3: Side B holds hostage Side A's critical interests A1, asking for A2, which is less important than A1. But Side A thinks that it can effectively defend its A1 and force Side B to yield B2, which would be bigger than A2. The deterrence of Side B fails.

Scenario 4: Side B holds hostage Side A's critical interests A1, asking for A2, thought to be smaller than A1. But Side A thinks A2 is much more important and prefers to fight for A2 at the cost of A1. The deterrence of Side B fails.

Scenario 5: Side A is extremely weak and possesses almost nothing. Thus, Side B can take hostage nothing valuable from Side A. In this situation, no matter how strong it may be, Side B cannot effectively deter Side A.[27] That's why the United States stresses attacking al-Qaeda.

Table 2. Scenarios illustrating the success or failure of military deterrence

Scenario	Property of the Deterred (Side A)	Strategic Interests Transaction	Result
1	Sovereign state	A1>A2 B2 ignorable	Succeed
2	Sovereign state	A1>A2 B1≥A1>A2	Fail and transform into mutual deterrence
3	Sovereign state or nonstate actor	A1>A2 B2≥A2	Fail
4	Sovereign state or nonstate actor	A2>A1	Fail
5	Nonstate actor	No A1, A2 . . . An	Fail

The above analysis may point to several considerations. First, success or failure is determined more by the deterred side, not vice versa. Primarily, it depends on whether or not the deterred side has real, crucial interests held hostage by the deterring side and on the cost exchange between the two opposing parties.

Second, deterrence strategy works only in proper conditions. In the current international system, composed of sovereign states, deterrence strategy may be one of the options for dealing with national security problems. However, as a military doctrine, deterrence is by no means a one-size-fits-all panacea. Not all adversaries are prone to deterrence. This is particularly true in asymmetric situations where the effects and coverage of military deterrence or subsequent military operations are essentially restricted.

Furthermore, observing what has happened after World War II, one may find that in many cases the military deterrence implemented by Western powers against targeted countries is not deterrence as originally defined. Rather, it has become twisted and alienated from the meaning of deterrence. Here, another related concept comes to mind—military coercion, which is less discussed in the world's military research circles.[28] Like military deterrence, military coercion is buttressed by strength, the will to use this strength, and the adversary's awareness of the former two. But a substantial difference exists between these two con-

cepts. Although deterrence aims to prevent an opponent from taking actions detrimental to one's interests, coercion goes a step further by compelling the opponent to do things desired by the coercer.[29] Joint Doctrine Publication 0-10, *British Maritime Doctrine*, defines "coerce" as "the use or threat of force to persuade an opponent to adopt a certain pattern of behavior against his wishes." It also notes that "coercion involves inducing an action that would otherwise not occur—either forcing an adversary away from one course of action, or compelling him to take another. Coercion will only be successful if a combination of threats and incentives is credible, and their potential is communicated unequivocally to those in a position to assess it."[30] In other words, *during the entire Cold War era, while the Western powers talked about deterrence, they often exercised coercion.* This twisted and alienated "deterrence" is best demonstrated by what they did with forward defense—a defensive posture in which one claims defense by "pointing his bayonet right at the neck of the opponent." With the notion of deterrence warped towards that of coercion, the nominal defensive nature of deterrence also transforms to the actual offensive nature of coercion. The history of the Cold War shows that deterrence imposed by the strong over the weak was often twisted and alienated, whereas counterdeterrence by the weak against the strong maintained its true defensive nature somewhat.
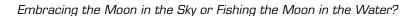
During the Cold War years, the Americans created another derivative concept of "extended deterrence," more commonly known as the "nuclear umbrella." This important notion, for which the author coined the well-comprehended abbreviation "ED" in 2009, serves as doctrinal support to the United States' global system of strategic alliance. According to the logic of ED, the United States provides its allies ED, protecting them from nuclear threats; in return, nations under this umbrella of ED allow the United States to deploy troops on their soil to form its forward defense. In the Cold War era, distressed by the geographic disadvantage of lacking enough strategic depth in Western Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), led by the United States, formulated a strategy involving the first use of nuclear weapons to counter the formidable Soviet conventional military threat—particularly the rapidly

maneuvering strike groups of Soviet armor. However, would this nuclear umbrella work? NATO's European members kept asking themselves whether the United States would protect Frankfurt at the cost of Detroit. They had further questions about what might be left in Europe after the launching of nuclear weapons against attacking Soviet forces. The crisis aroused by the deployment of Soviet and US intermediate missiles in Europe during late 1980s further exposed the fallacy of this umbrella. People found that these limited-range nuclear missiles could reach the inland of neither the United States nor the Soviet Union; instead, wouldn't those nuclear warheads shot from either side explode over the heads of Europeans?[31]

Allegations from Eastern Asia held that the United States' nuclear ED had been playing another important nonproliferation role: to discourage Japan and South Korea from developing indigenous nuclear weapons. But, again, this allegation is like the "half-filled bottle" paradox, which depends on whether one pays attention to the full half or the empty half. On the one hand, the United States demands that North Korea give up its nuclear weapon program, and, on the other, it extends the nuclear umbrella to South Korea—by which it highlights the role of nuclear weapons in Korean security challenges and offers a sound reason for Pyongyang to hold on to its own nuclear program. The North may well argue that "I need such an umbrella also, so I commit to making it myself." The current development on the Korean Peninsula makes it quite obvious that the nuclear ED is counterproductive to denuclearization efforts.[32] Whether Washington is aware of such a self-contradiction or just wants to ignore it is a different story.

It will be increasingly clear that nuclear deterrence, no matter how much one may exaggerate its role, works mainly in countering nuclear-capable strategic adversaries. To threaten the use of nuclear weapons in conventional conflicts only pushes the threatening party into the dilemma of never-ending hesitation. In the short term, such a threat might deter opponents. But in the long run, it would usually generate a strong backlash by irritating opponents and causing them to pursue nuclear
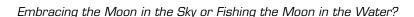
weapons as a countermeasure. In this sense, *nuclear deterrence also acts as a theoretical and practical irritation to nuclear proliferation*. Here, one sees an interesting paradox: "positive security assurance" works negatively, while "negative security assurance" plays a truly active role.[33]

One can trace one of the reasons for the appearance of the deterrence concept back to the unwanted overkill capability of nuclear weapons, which reduces them to nothing more than a set of political tools. To enhance nuclear weapons' operational "feasibility," the two superpowers developed various kinds of low-yield nuclear warheads, labeling them "tactical nuclear weapons," an indication that they considered them usable on the battleground. Still, neither side dared to employ them and thereby open Pandora's box. Inspired by these so-called tactical nuclear weapons, some Western strategists later developed a more ambiguous concept: conventional deterrence. The logic is this: thanks to high technology, some advanced conventional weapons can now do the jobs heretofore performed by tactical nuclear weapons. Consequently, these advanced conventional weapons should also play a deterrent role alongside that of tactical nuclear weapons. Truthfully, whether deterrence bears either a nuclear hue or a conventional color, there is no direct link between a weapon's destructive capability and the effectiveness of deterrence.

Post–Cold War Deterrence

During the Cold War, the United States regarded the Soviets and Soviet-led Warsaw Pact as its strategic opponents. In that context, nuclear deterrence as an underlying strategy was understandable. In today's environment, long after the end of the Cold War, to continue allowing deterrence to guide one's military strategy is ludicrous.

Since the conclusion of the Cold War, nuclear deterrence has lost some of its prominence but remains an often-debated topic. The tendency seems to indicate that nuclear deterrence is being reduced to its original role: *to deter one's adversary from launching nuclear attacks*. A renowned Chinese nuclear specialist once remarked that the role that

nuclear weapons can play is tiny, right there to be seen. Any attempt to amplify it—to inflate it to the cornerstone of national security or the fundamental protection against any or all security threats—is to no avail. The US *Nuclear Posture Review Report* of 2010 declares that the United States will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in defending national security. This is a small step in the right direction. Still, this policy document insists on extending nuclear deterrence for maintaining US military alliances, making this small forward step look somewhat reluctant and awkward.[34]

With the end of the Cold War, economic interdependency has developed substantially among nations who share numerous common interests. Relationships between previously hostile states have changed, with shared interests and conflicting interests coexisting. Big powers are now entangled in a complex half-friend-half-enemy or both-friend-and-enemy relationship, wherein they check yet depend on each other, need yet compete against each other, and squeeze yet cooperate with each other. Such complexity will undoubtedly affect the development of military strategies. When designing a deterrence strategy against a potential enemy, how can one deter a half-friend-half-enemy type of state? Will half-deterrence come into being (something beyond the author's imagination)? In the current global landscape, mutual deterrence between nuclear powers still has some reasons to exist. However, it is obviously inappropriate to overstate the importance of mutual deterrence, which will only drag nuclear states back into another cold war.

As nations move forward, deterrence from conventional weapons becomes even more elusive. Although it may have some value and play a limited role in some circumstances, such deterrence is really not worth serious attention.

Employment of Deterrence Strategy by Developing Nations

Western powers have been quite fond of deterrence strategies, but should developing nations, often the militarily weak side, follow suit
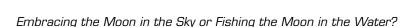
and make deterrence the cornerstone of their military strategies? Military leaders in developing nations ought to understand this concept, see it through, and possibly use a deterrence strategy against the right opponent at the appropriate time and under certain conditions. But they should be careful not to go too far down this path. In planning such military deterrence, these leaders should clearly answer the questions against whom, by what means, and will such deterrence work? More importantly, they should be aware that *deterrence not only generates military uncertainties but also imposes an overwhelmingly intimidating presence, which is politically offensive even to third parties*. The question then becomes, In the course of maintaining national security, should a developing nation appear intimidating? More specifically, how, to whom, and under what circumstances should a developing nation demonstrate its deterring might?

Militaries of developing nations may deliver clear messages to potential aggressors or hostile elements trying to subvert their legal governments or break their sovereignty, warning that they will pay a costly price for their conspiracies. Fundamentally, the national security of a developing nation can count only on painstaking and steadfast efforts towards defense modernization. For developing nations, building a highly capable military force is certainly difficult, just as hard as embracing the moon in the sky, whereas deterrence is but a logical or consequential side effect of military power, like the moon's reflection in the water. Eventually, as one successfully embraces the moon in the sky, he or she gets the moon in the water automatically. ✪

Notes

1. For the many theories that sprouted from deterrence theory, see James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff Jr., *Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey*, 5th ed. (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2004), chap. 8.

2. See 核武器与对外政策, translated from Henry A. Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957). See also 选择的必要 (商务印书馆, 北京, 1972),

translated from Kissinger, *The Necessity for Choice: Prospects of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 12.

3. Kissinger soon after modified the third component, "the assessment of these by the potential aggressor," to "communicate with the potential opponent to ensure that it understands the above two." See Kissinger, *Necessity for Choice*.

4. Strictly speaking, these two concepts were all coined by US strategic experts and broadly accepted by the entire Western world, thanks to the dominating status and influence of the United States over the world after World War II. This is an important indication of the Americanization of Western strategic thinking. See also Stephen M. Millett, "The Moral Dilemma of Nuclear Deterrence," *Parameters* 10, no. 1 (March 1980): 33–38, http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/parameters/Articles/1980/1980%20millett.pdf.

5. "Deterrence strategy" continues to appear in such policy documents as the US Department of Defense's *Nuclear Posture Review Report* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, April 2010), http://www.defense.gov/npr/docs/2010%20nuclear%20posture%20review%20report.pdf.

6. Strategic balance existed only briefly between the West and the East in Europe from the 1970s to the mid-1980s.

7. Many military analysts tend to agree that the concept of deterrence can be traced back to Sun Tzu, the famous, ancient Chinese strategist who, among other things, first put forward the enlightening idea of "winning without fighting." One should note here that Sun Tzu's doctrine primarily reflects the military logic of the stronger rather than the weaker, and politically it serves the purpose of a king to pursue hegemony. In admiring Sun Tzu's great contribution to military thinking, one should also be aware of the historical limits in his thought. The author would also argue that Sun Tzu's "winning without fighting" doctrine conveys broader and deeper implications than mere "deterrence."

8. See 美国军事战略与政策史 (解放军出版社, 北京, 1986), 440–41, trans. 彭光谦 et al., from Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977).

9. See also Bernard Brodie, ed., *The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1946).

10. See 为第三次世界大战选择战略 (军事战略), 360–434.

11. See 美国军事战略与政策史, 481, translated from Weigley, *American Way of War*.

12. See 核武器与对外政策 (世界知识出版社, 北京, 1959), translated from Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*.

13. For details, please refer to 论逐步升级 — 比喻和假想情景 (世界知识出版社, 北京, 1965), translated from Herman Kahn, *On Escalation: Metaphors and Scenarios* (New York: Praeger, 1965).

14. During the Cuban missile crisis, the blocking US Navy forces dropped depth charges to force Soviet submarines to surface. Fearing that a Soviet-US war had broken out, a Soviet submarine almost fired nuclear torpedoes at the US fleet. In retrospect, Robert McNamara, then the US secretary of defense, recalled, "We came within a hair's breadth of war with the Soviet Union. . . . We were 'this' close to nuclear war, and luck prevented it." See 王新森, "被迫浮起" (舰船知识), vol. 364, 58–63.

15. John H. Cushman Jr., "2 Soviet Warships Reportedly Bump U.S. Navy Vessels," *New York Times*, 13 February 1988, http://www.nytimes.com/1988/02/13/2-soviet-warships-reportedly-bump-us-navy-vessels.html.

16. See "道义上左右为难的核威慑战略" (军事战略), 357, translated from Millett, "Moral Dilemma of Nuclear Deterrence," 33–38.

17. In sociology the Matthew effect, or accumulated advantage, refers to the phenomenon of "the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer." The term takes its name from a biblical verse: "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath" (Matthew 25:29).

18. Both the United States and the Soviet Union insisted on a defensive policy but prepared to launch a nuclear attack first.

19. Hans M. Kristensen, Robert S. Norris, and Matthew G. McKinzie, *Chinese Nuclear Forces and U.S. Nuclear War Planning* (Washington, DC: Federation of American Scientists and the Natural Resources Defense Council, November 2006), 133, http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/china/Book2006.pdf.

20. For example, some of the US strategists considered the Korean War a strategic feint attack by Joseph Stalin. They fell into the mud of conspiracy theory.

21. 周恩来 [Zhou Enlai], "美军如越过三八线，我们要管," 周恩来外交文选 [*Zhou Enlai's Works on Foreign Affairs*] (中央文献出版社, May 1990), 25–27.

22. See *1900 年以来的美国史 (中)* (中国社会科学出版社, 1983), 464–65, trans. 刘绪贻, from Arthur Stanley Link, with the collaboration of William Bruce Catton, *American Epoch: A History of the United States since the 1890s*, 2nd ed., rev. and rewritten (New York: Alfred. A. Knopf, 1963).

23. Accordingly, the concepts of maximum and minimum deterrence and of limited deterrence, all of which base themselves on the measurement of deterrence capabilities, are also fallacies.

24. We may recall that the United States unilaterally specified its desired level of deterrence capability: to be able to destroy 50 percent of Soviet industries. Why set the figure at 50 percent and not, for example, at 60 percent? This is another indication that such measurements were sheer speculation and groundless subjective judgment.

25. One can find the tendency of shifting the concept of deterrence towards unilateralism in the changes to Kissinger's different descriptions of the three components of deterrence. His definition of 1957 was generally reasonable, but the one he offered in 1960 reflects the attempt to transform deterrence into unilateral actions.

26. Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, chap. 74. Various English versions are available online. For example, see *Tao Te Ching*, Sacred Books of the East, vol. 39, trans. J. Legge, [1891], http://www.sacred-texts.com/tao/taote.htm.

27. In the eyes of a military dialectician, the relationship is actually starting to reverse; that is, the otherwise stronger Side B is now prone to be threatened by Side A.

28. Some Chinese scholars translated the term *coercion* as 威逼 or 强迫 instead of 胁迫. See 李彬, 军备控制理论分析 (国防工业出版社, 2006), 67.

29. Another important difference exists between the two concepts: Although success through deterrence is invisible and immeasurable, that through coercion is visible.

30. Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 0-10, *British Maritime Doctrine*, August 2011, 2-15n, 2-24, http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/C39999AB-E1E3-4A0F-843E-FE82CEC6726E/0/20110816JDP0_10_BMD.pdf. See also JDP 0-01, *British Defence Doctrine*, 4th ed., November 2011, 1-16, "Utility of Force," http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/FDB67DF9-5835-47FD-897D-CA82C17EC7A5/0/20111130jdp001_bdd_Ed4.pdf.

31. See 美国军事战略与政策史, 517–18, translated from Weigley, *American Way of War*. Extended deterrence strategy fell into the dilemma of "surrender or face mutual destruction," as perceived by many people at the time. Largely due to this dilemma, the US military later developed the AirLand Battle concept, with the intention of using nuclear weapons only as a last resort.

32. On 16 June 2009, the presidents of the United States and South Korea signed the Joint Vision for the Alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea. For the first time, the US commitment to provide extended deterrence to South Korea was written unequivocally in an official declaration. See "Joint Vision for the Alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea," White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 16 June 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Joint-vision-for-the-alliance-of-the -United-States-of-America-and-the-Republic-of-Korea.

33. Right after its first success with a nuclear bomb, China announced its unconditional "no first use" negative security assurance to the whole world.

34. Department of Defense, *Nuclear Posture Review Report*, 15–17.

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